

## Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-14

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R 091341Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5844

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

SECDEF WASHDC

13TH ADVON UDORN

USSAG NAKHON PHANOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12994

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, TH, US

SUBJ: THANAT KHOMAN AND HIS BILL ON FOREIGN TROOPS

REF: BANGKOK 12810

1. SINGTO CHANGTRAKUN, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA) MEMBER AND HEADMASTER OF BANGKOK CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, SPOKE WITH US AUGUST 2 ABOUT THE LEGISLATION THANAT KHOMAN HAS PROPOSED IN THE NLA ON FOREIGN TROOPS. SINGTO IS A CO-SPONSOR OF THANAT'S BILL WHICH REQUIRES PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL BEFORE FOREIGN TROOPS CAN BE STATIONED IN THAILAND (REFTEL). HE SAID THAT HE AND OTHER CO-SPONSORS SIGNED ON WITHOUT REALLY STUDYING THE DRAFT LEGISLATION AFTER THANAT'S INFORMAL AND LOW-KEY SOLICITATIONS. SINGTO POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT UNDER SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PHAEN WANNAMETHI, ALTHOUGH A SPONSOR OF THE BILL, LATER CHANGED HIS MIND. PHAEN  
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APPARENTLY CAME TO THE OPINION THAT THE BILL WOULD

ADVERSELY AFFECT THAI-U.S. RELATIONS. SINGTO BELIEVED THAT PHAEN'S ARGUMENT WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE CABINET'S REJECTION OF THE BILL WHEN IT WAS INFORMALLY SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION LAST MAY.

2. SINGTO SAID THAT THANAT PROPOSED THE BILL TO STRENGTHEN HIS POPULARITY AMONG THOSE DOMESTIC AND BUREAUCRATIC FORCES SUPPORTING FOREIGN POLICY CHANGES. SINGTO WARNED THAT THANAT'S OBJECTIVE WAS SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT AND THEREFORE HE MIGHT RESORT TO ANY DISCLOSURE OF ARGUMENT, INCLUDING CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM PRESIDENT NIXON'S WATERGATE TROUBLES, TO AUGMENT HIS CONTENTIONS.

3. ACCORDING TO SINGTO, HOWEVER, THANAT'S "HOPIER THAN THOU" ATTITUDE, THE WORSENING SITUATION IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, AND GROWING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS SEVERELY RESTRICT THE BILL'S CHANCE OF PASSAGE. SINGTO SAID THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE NLA MEMBERS RECOGNIZE THESE EXTERNAL DANGERS AND WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO EMBARK ON ANY NEW ADVENTURES AT THIS TIME. NEVERTHELESS, HE FELT THAT DURING THE DEBATE ON THE BILL THE RTG MIGHT HAVE TO BARE FACTS AND MORE CLEARLY DEFINE THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICIES TO THE NLA.

4. THE TWENTY-ONE CO-SPONSORS LISTED ON THE DRAFT LEGISLATION FILED WITH THE NLA SECRETARIAT MAY 18 INCLUDE SOME INFLUENTIAL AND RESPECTED ASSEMBLY MEMBERS, SUCH AS:

KASEM CHATIKAWANIT - DIRECTOR, ELECTRICITY GENERATING AUTHORITY OF THAILAND (EGAT); CHAIRMAN, "GROUP OF 99"

MARUT BUNNAK - PRESIDENT, LAWYER'S ASSOCIATION OF THAILAND

PUAI UNPHAKON - ECONOMIC ADVISOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER

THALOENG THAMRONG NAWASAWAT - DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES (MAC) AT THE TIME WHEN HE SIGNED AS CO-SPONSOR. AFTER THE MAY 1974 CABINET RESHUFFLE HE  
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BECAME DEPUTY MINISTER, MAC.

YAI SAWITCHAT - FORMER DEMOCRAT PARTY PARLIAMENTARIAN FROM NAKHON SAWAN

6. COMMENT: WE AGREE WITH SINGTO THAT THE THANAT BILL MIGHT SPARK A NEW ROUND OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON THAI-AMERICAN RELATIONS, PERHAPS MUCH TO OUR DISCOMFORT. FROM THE CALIBER

OF PEOPLE WHO CO-SPONSORED THANAT'S BILL, IT WOULD ALSO  
APPEAR THAT THE SANYA GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE AN UNCOMFORTABLE  
TIME EXPLAINING ITS POSITION DURING A GENERAL NLA DEBATE  
ON FOREIGN POLICY.

7. BECAUSE OF THE PRECEDENCE OF THE NEWLY INTRODUCED BUDGET  
BILL AND A BACKLOG OF OTHER LEGISLATION, WE NOW BELIEVE THAT  
THANAT'S BILL WILL NOT BE DEBATED IN THE NEXT COUPLE WEEKS.  
KINTNER

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## Message Attributes

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